



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Tres Rios Field Office  
29211 Highway 184  
Dolores, Colorado 81323



In Reply Refer To:  
(3600/3809) COSO1000

June 17, 2016

OPTIONAL REPLY DUE: JULY 1, 2016

Dear Interested Party,

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tres Rios Field Office is seeking your input regarding a collaborative project proposal ("proposed project") from BLM and the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety - Inactive Mines Division (CDRMS) that would seek to stabilize waste rock dumps and address ongoing erosion at the Centennial and Sun Cup Mines, which are located in the Joe Davis Hill area of Western San Miguel County. You are receiving this letter because you have been identified as a person or organization which may have an interest in the proposed action.

Any information obtained through this scoping process will then be considered by the Tres Rios Field Office while it prepares an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental impacts for a reasonable range of alternatives, including the proposed project. If approved, a third party contractor would be used to complete construction work.

- What: Stabilization of eroding waste rock piles by excavating eroded materials, armoring drainage channels, and placing excavated materials in adjacent areas not prone to erosion.
- Where: Centennial Mine: T. 43 N., R. 18 W., Sec. 36. Sun Cup Mine: T. 43 N., R. 17 W., Sec. 31  
Access to the site would be from Highway 141 Disappointment Valley, then south on Mineral Mountain for approximately 6 miles to the mine access road (figures 1 & 2).
- When: Work is expected to start around August 29, 2016 and be completed within approximately 3 months.
- How Much: Approximately 5 acres of new-disturbance adjacent to approximately 9.4 acres of un-vegetated to sparsely existing mine disturbance, of which approximately 6.5 acres would be re-disturbed.

The purpose of and need for this action is to stop ongoing erosion at two mine waste rock dumps. These uranium/vanadium mines were initially developed in the 1970s, prior to the enactment of BLM's current locatable minerals surface management regulations (43 CFR Subpart 3809). Waste rock (sandstone) from the mines was placed directly into ephemeral drainages. Mining operations ceased in the 1980s and the sites were then reclaimed. Over time, retention structures silted up and the natural drainages began to re-establish themselves. Erosion of the waste rock occurs during storm water events. It is estimated that roughly 1,000 cubic yards of waste rock material has been eroded from the dump at each of the mines. The CDRMS recently secured funding that will allow it to hire a third party contractor to complete construction work for the proposed project to stabilize the dumps and stop erosion.

Under the proposed project, waste rock stockpiles would be stabilized by re-shaping the dumps and constructing engineered drainage channels large enough to contain the maximum expected flows during storm water events. The drainage channels would be excavated to remove waste rock, and then armored with rip-rap to prevent further erosion. Clean rip rap material may be brought from off site or excavated from a potential site identified nearby. Any available topsoil would be salvaged and used for reclamation. The project area would be seeded using a native seed mix. No mine waste rock would be hauled off site. Waste rock material excavated from the eroding drainages would be moved to areas less prone to erosion. Old exploration roads above each of the mines may also be ditched, barred, or obliterated to minimize run-on during storm water events. Both mines are dry, with no water issuing from underground workings or impounded behind the portal fill. There is no water in the ephemeral drainages except during storm water runoff events. The existing dump at the Centennial Mine covers approximately 6.1 acres, of which approximately 4 acres would be re-disturbed for the proposed project. The existing dump at the Sun Cup Mine covers approximately 3.6 acres, of which approximately 2.5 acres would be re-disturbed. An estimated 1.25 acres of new disturbance for waste rock storage would be needed around the margins of each dump to store the material excavated from the drainages. The potential rip-rap source would cover approximately 2 acres and is the only new disturbance that would be associated with the proposed project. Topsoil and vegetation in areas of new disturbance would be bladed off and used for reclamation. Up to 0.5 acres could be disturbed for run-on control. No new roads would need to be constructed, but approximately 2.0 miles of existing access road would have to be bladed. Fugitive dust would be controlled during earth work and excavation. A gamma survey was performed in anticipation of the proposed project, and the results were above background, but not acutely dangerous. Design features and personal protective equipment would limit worker's uranium, radon, and other daughter element exposure to below allowable workplace safety limits.

Comment regarding the project should be submitted via email or hard copy by July 1, 2016 to:

BLM Tres Rios Field Office  
Attn: James Blair  
29211 Highway 184,  
Dolores, CO 81323  
or [jblair@blm.gov](mailto:jblair@blm.gov).

If you have questions or concerns regarding this proposal, please contact James Blair, BLM Geologist, at (970) 882-7296. Please note that comments and information submitted regarding this project, including email addresses and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review and disclosure. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name, e-mail address, or street address from public view or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by the law. All submission from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Sincerely,



*for* Connie Clementson  
Field Manager – Tres Rios Field Office

Enclosures: Maps (1p).



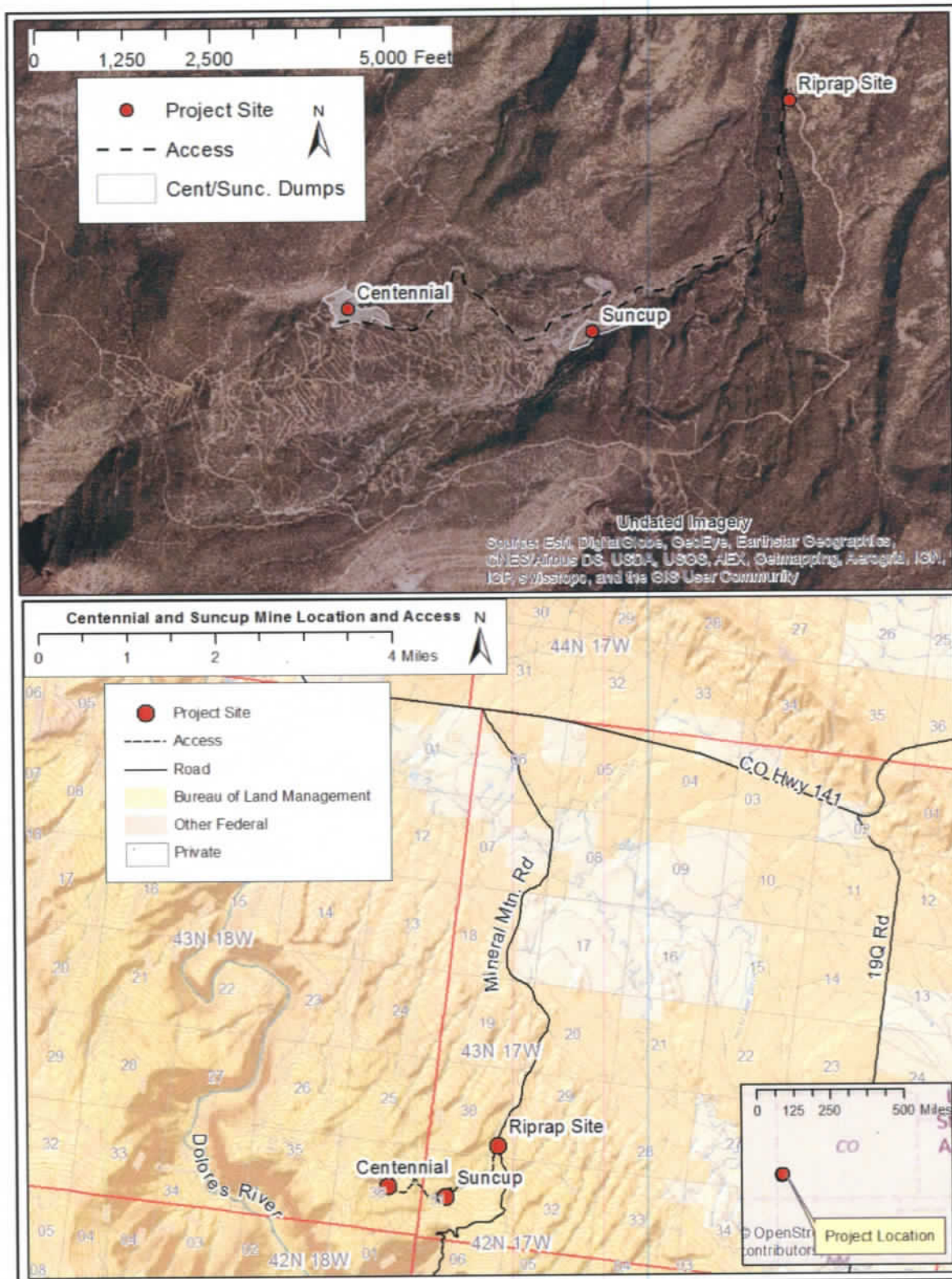


Figure 1: (Above) - Aerial imagery map showing the Centennial and Sun Cup Mine waste rock dumps, riprap site, and access. Note the extensive disturbance from pre-existing drilling and exploration roads. Figure 2: (Below) - A regional location and land status map for the proposed project.